

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03791 041340Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4791
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3791

EXDIS

DAMASCUS FOR SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS) LE
SUBJ: THE SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS:
AID TO LEBANON

1. FOLLOWING UNCLEARED AND BASED ON AMBASSADOR'S NOTES.
AFTER PM HOSS, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS AND UNDER SECRETARY
HABIB AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON ENTERED THE MEETING
SECRETARY ASKED PRESIDENT SARKIS FOR HIS VIEWS ON THE ECONOMIC
SITUATION IN LEBANON. PRESIDENT SAID THAT IN SPITE OF
DIFFICULT CONDITIONS PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE. SYRIANS WERE
ASSURING SECURITY, AND PROGRESS ON THE CAIRO AGREEMENT DURING
LAST WEEKEND HAD OPENED UP A PROSPECT OF PEACE. (LATER, DURING
LUNCH, HE REMARKED TO AMBASSADOR THAT HE THOUGHT PROCESS OF
BRINGING PALESTINIANS UNDER CONTROL WAS NOW IRREVERSIBLE). IT
WOULD PRODUCE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REASSURANCE THE PEOPLE NEEDED.
AS WITH GENEVA, THERE WAS A PROCEDURAL PROBLEM. THERE HAD BEEN
AN INTERNAL DISPUTE WITHIN LEBANON AS TO WHETHER A POLITICAL
ENTENTE OR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD SHOULD
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TAKE PRECEDENCE. HE BELIEVED PROGRESS MADE IN LAST FEW
DAYS ON CAIRO ACCORD MIGHT OPEN THE WAY FOR POLITICAL
ENTENTE.

2. WITH REGARD TO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PRESIDENT SAID
LEBANESE CONDITION WAS WEAK. HE HOPED THAT OPENING OF THE
SECURITY DOOR--(MOVEMENT ON THE CAIRO ACCORD)--WOULD

HELP. HE THANKED THE USG FOR ITS HELP AND SAID LEBANON COULD NOT COPE ALONE. IT NEEDED LARGE AMOUNTS OF HELP. IT NEEDED INTERNATIONAL HELP, OF WHICH LITTLE HAD BEEN RECEIVED TO DATE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE SCALE OF DAMAGE WHICH HE ESTIMATED AT TEN TIMES THE NATIONAL BUDGET.

3. SECRETARY SAID IT SEEMED TO HIM SITUATION PERHAPS REQUIRED SOME TYPE OF CONSORTIUM APPROACH. THERE WAS PROBABLY NO OTHER WAY TO GET NECESSARY RESOURCES TOGETHER. PRESIDENT SAID LEBANON HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN HELP RECEIVED FROM ITS ARAB BRETHREN. PERHAPS THEY SHOULD TRY TO GET IT ON A WIDER SCALE, I.E., GO BEYOND THE ARABS. HE THOUGHT THE U.S. HAD A ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS RESPECT.

4. THE SECRETARY AGREED AND ASKED WHY THE ARABS HAD NOT BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING. PRESIDENT SAID ONE FACTOR WAS INTERNAL POLITICAL DISCORD. SECRETARY ASKED WHAT WAS REQUIRED TO GET OVER THAT OBSTACLE. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED, SMILING, AND OFF THE RECORD, THAT THERE WERE THREE THINGS: FOR THE USG TO RESUME CONSTRUCTION OF ITS OFFICE BUILDING; FOR PANAM TO RESUME FLIGHTS TO BEIRUT; AND FOR EXIM TO BECOME ACTIVE HERE. PRESIDENT HAD REMARKED EARLIER TO AMBASSADOR PARKER THAT RESUMPTION OF PANAM FLIGHTS WOULD BE SIGN OF RETURN TO NORMAL. HE HAD DISCUSSED MATTER WITH PANAM REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE THAT MORNING AND LATTER HAD TOLD HIM TO TAKE IT UP WITH THE SECRET

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SECRETARY.
PARKER

SECRET

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